

WILLINGHAM • BUCKINGHAM • PEPOY • LEIALOHA

FABLES™

127

VERTIGO

May '13
suggested for
mature readers
vertigo.com

On an otherwise unspectacular hillside, in the modest kingdom of Haven, a man and an alien being in the semblance of a woman wrestled over their fates, not realizing it was actually mine being decided that day.

MARRIAGE?

TO WHOM?

TO GEPPETTO, OF COURSE. THAT'S WHY HE'S NOT HERE, SINCE IT WOULD BE **GROSSLY** UNSUITABLE FOR THE SUITOR TO PLEAD HIS OWN CASE TO HIS INTENDED.

WE'RE NOT **BARBARIANS**, AFTER ALL.

WOW.

NEVER SAW THAT COMING.

THE SHIPPING NEWS

Chapter
Three of
Snow
White

Bill Willingham: writer-creator Mark Buckingham: pencils
Steve Leialoha: inks (1-5, 7, 17-20) Lee Loughridge: colors Gregory Lockard: assoc. ed.
Andrew Pepoy: inks (6, 8-16) Todd Klein: letters Shelly Bond: editor





BUT NOW PROPRIETY DICTATES WE MUTUALLY **RETIRE**, AND YOU TAKE YOURSELF TO A RESPECTABLE REMOVE.

UHM...OF COURSE. RIGHT AWAY.



WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR AMBASSADOR OF THE **HEART** WITH EVERY ANTICIPATION OF A DELIGHTFUL AND PRODUCTIVE NEGOTIATION.

RIGHT AWAY.



FAREWELL, MOST ALLURING CELESTIAL LADY.



AGAIN, I SAY, **WOW**.

BRAVO.

MY HAT'S OFF TO YOU, SIR.

HOW DID YOU EVER GET SOUR OLD GEPPETTO TO **AGREE** TO THIS?



I **HAVEN'T**. NOT YET. BUT NOW I'VE BOUGHT A LOT OF TIME TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO CONVINCE, TRICK OR **FORCE** HIM TO GO ALONG WITH IT.

NO WAY!



ACCORDING TO MY RESEARCH, NEITHER PARTY IS ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO THE OTHER FOR AS LONG AS THE NEGOTIATION TAKES PLACE.

AND FAIRY WEDDING NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DRAG ON FOR YEARS--**CENTURIES**, IN FACT.

AND I THOUGHT I WAS THE PRINCE OF SCHEMERS. YOU'RE LIKE A **GOD** TO ME.



MEANWHILE...

SHOULD WE BREAK IT DOWN?

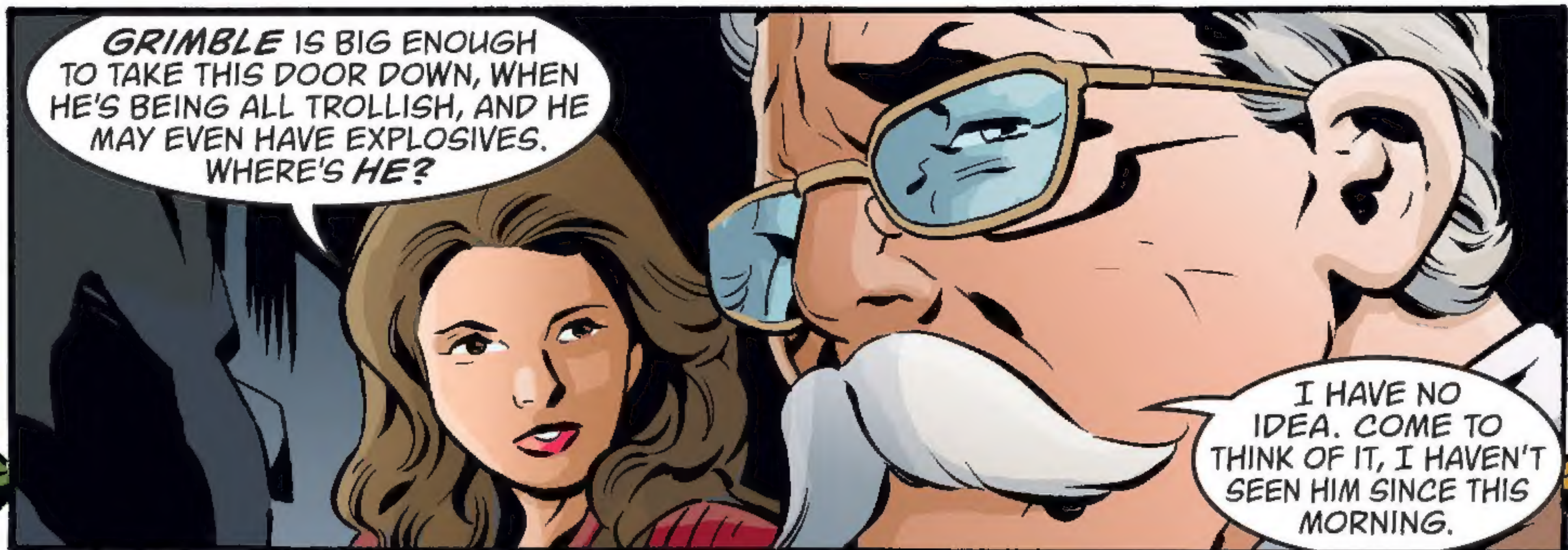
HOW?



THIS DOOR'S SOLID OAK. WE'D NEED A BATTERING RAM.

OR A SHAPED CHARGE.

OR BIGBY. OR BEAST. WHERE ARE OUR BIG GUNS WHEN WE NEED THEM?



GRIMBLE IS BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE THIS DOOR DOWN, WHEN HE'S BEING ALL TROLLISH, AND HE MAY EVEN HAVE EXPLOSIVES. WHERE'S HE?

I HAVE NO IDEA. COME TO THINK OF IT, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE THIS MORNING.



WHERE ARE THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR WITCHES, THEN?

MOVING BACK INTO THE NEW THIRTEENTH FLOOR.



WELL, ONE OF THEM COULD-- I DON'T KNOW--TURN THE DOOR INTO BUTTERFLIES OR SOMETHING.

SURE, BECAUSE THEY ALWAYS JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE A "TURN THE DOOR INTO BUTTERFLIES" SPELL ALL CONJURED UP AND READY TO FIRE.



YOU'RE NOT BEING HELPFUL, MRS. SPRATT.

NOT MY NAME ANY-MORE!

HOLD ON. NO NEED TO *SNIFE* AT EACH OTHER.



I THINK I CAN PICK THIS, IF ONE OF YOU HAS A *HAIRPIN*, OR SOMETHING CLOSE.

YOOPS!

IF YOU PEOPLE WOULD STOP *CLUCKING* OUTSIDE MY DOOR AND READ YOUR OWN LAWS, YOU'D DISCOVER THERE'S NO CAUSE TO INTERFERE.



HERE. ONE OF THE TWO COPIES RECOVERED FROM THE *MESS* YOU SILLY PEOPLE MADE OF THE PREVIOUS ITERATION OF FABLETOWN.

CAREFULLY NOTE THE PART WHERE THE SANCTITY OF *TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE* IS AFFIRMED.



BUT YOU *AREN'T* MARRIED TO--

DON'T START THAT AGAIN. I JUST HAD AN EARFUL OF THE SAME *NONSENSE* FROM MY WIFE.



WE PLEDGED OURSELVES TO EACH OTHER BY STRONG OATHS IN THE OLD WAY. THAT'S A *MARRIAGE*, EVEN BY YOUR OWN STANDARDS.

THEREFORE SNOW WAS NEVER *LEGALLY* MARRIED TO PRINCE CHARMING *OR* THE WOLF. BOTH HAVE TO BE TREATED AS THOUGH THEY NEVER EXISTED.



THAT'S YOUR LAW. READ IT.

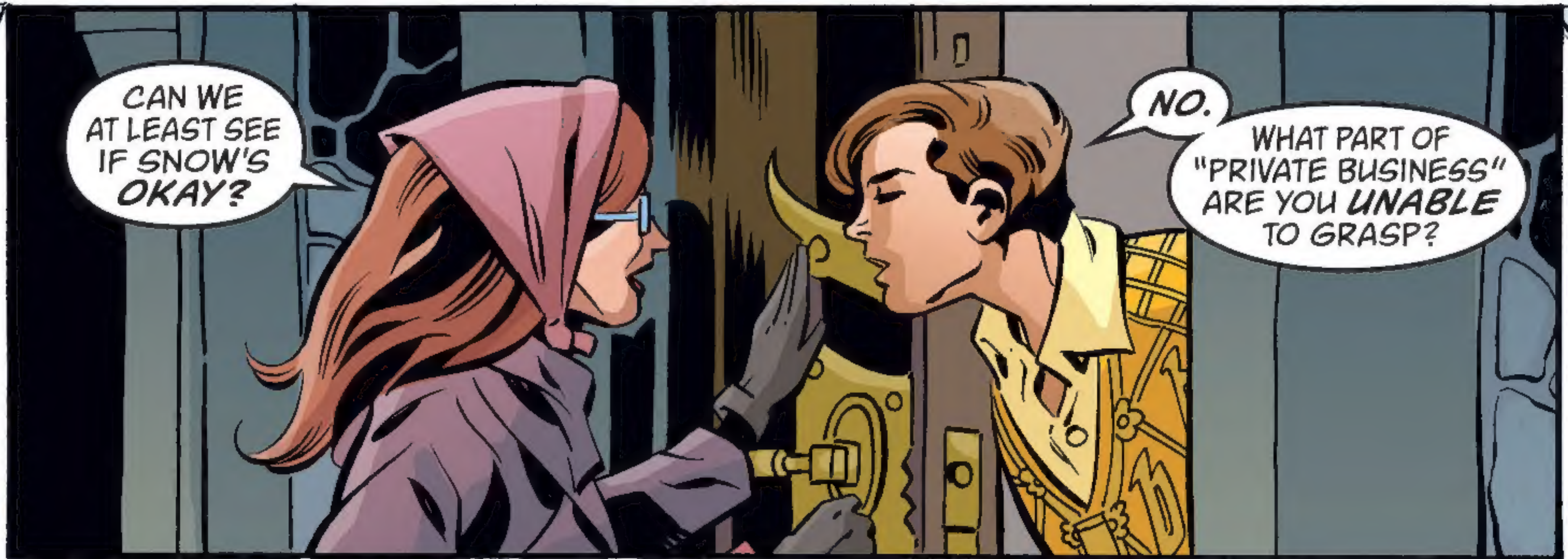
WELL, TRUE, BUT THEY WERE WRITTEN IN A DIFFERENT TIME. A DIFFERENT AGE.

THEN AMEND THEM.



BUT UNTIL YOU DO, GET AWAY FROM MY DOOR AND QUIT INTRUDING INTO THE PRIVATE BUSINESS OF A FAMILY.

WAIT!



CAN WE AT LEAST SEE IF SNOW'S OKAY?

NO. WHAT PART OF "PRIVATE BUSINESS" ARE YOU UNABLE TO GRASP?



WELL, FUCK US, HUH?

CAN I GET AN "AMEN" ON THAT?

My dad was making progress by then, having visited thirty worlds in as many hours.

SOMETHING REALLY **STRANGE** HAPPENED HERE.



THIS IS THE THIRD WORLD **DARE** TOUCHED DOWN IN, BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

HERE AND GONE IN AN **INSTANT**.



AT LEAST WE'RE ON THE RIGHT **TRACK** THEN, HUH?

THREE POINTS OF CONTACT GIVE US A LINE OF TRAVEL, RIGHT? WE SIMPLY NEED TO GO IN THAT DIRECTION.

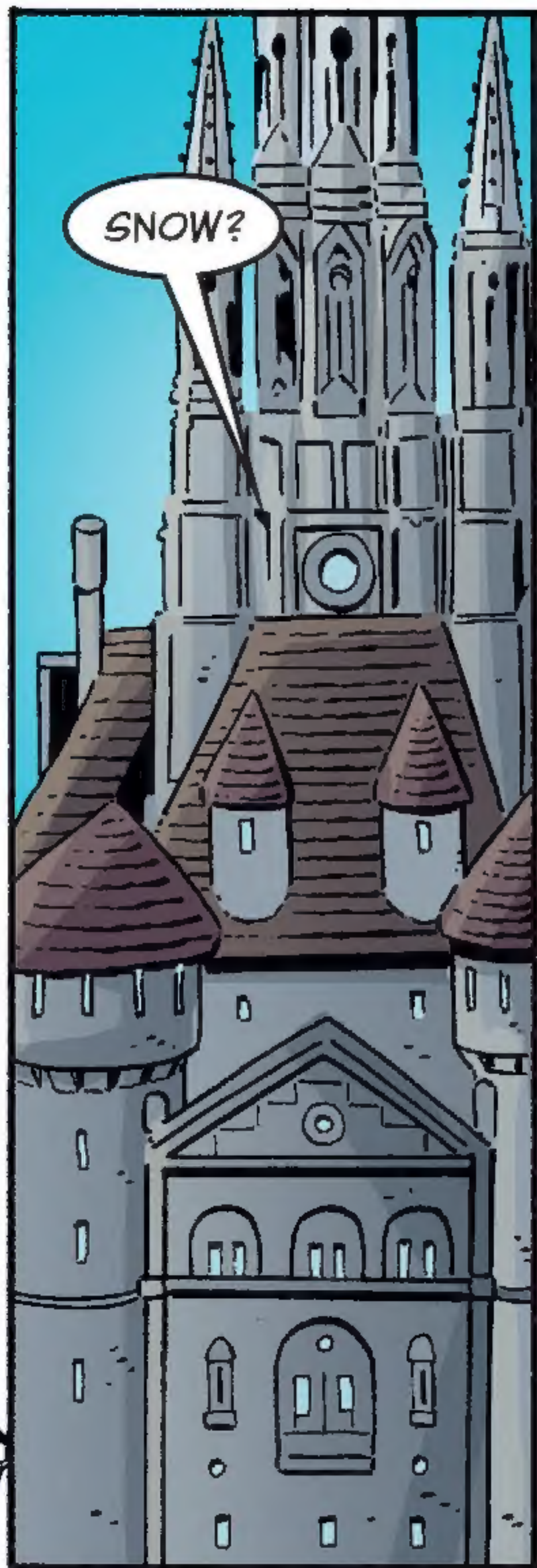


THAT'S JUST IT. WE **DON'T** HAVE A LINE TO FOLLOW BECAUSE WORLDS **DON'T** LINE UP.



AT LEAST NOT IN ANY WAY THAT **I'M** CAPABLE OF SEEING.





SNOW?



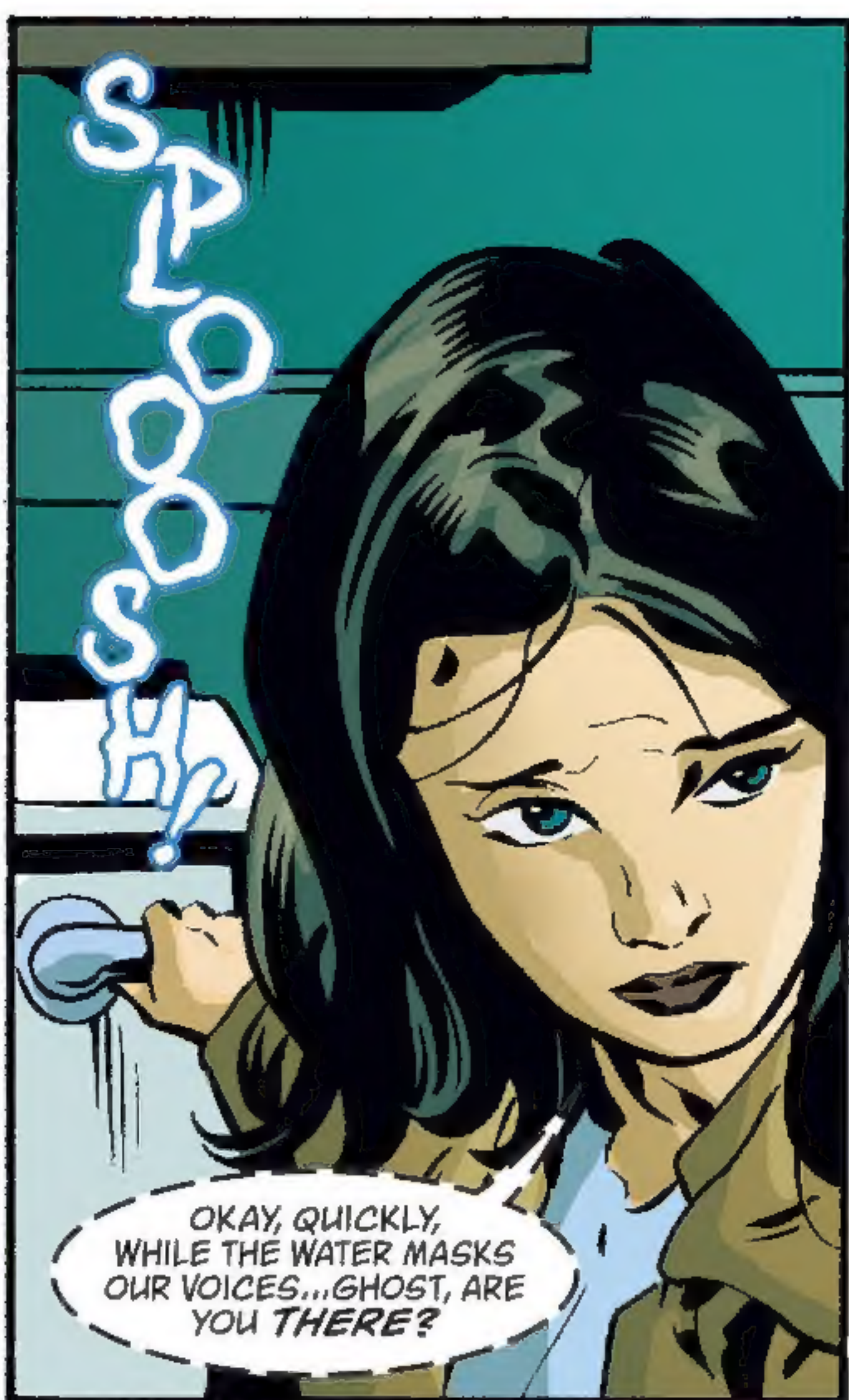
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO BE *IN* THERE, HONEY?

TAP TAP



I'M GOING TO THE BATHROOM!

IT TAKES AS LONG AS IT TAKES, SO BACK OFF!



SPLASH!

OKAY, QUICKLY, WHILE THE WATER MASKS OUR VOICES...GHOST, ARE YOU *THERE*?



OF COURSE, MOMMY. I DON'T LIKE THE MEANY MAN YOU'RE WITH.

IS HE A BAD MAN?



YES, A VERY BAD MAN.

SHOULD I KILL HIM, THEN?

I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO.



NO. DON'T DO ANYTHING.



WHY DO YOU KEEP FLUSHING THE TOILET?

ARE YOU *OKAY* IN THERE?

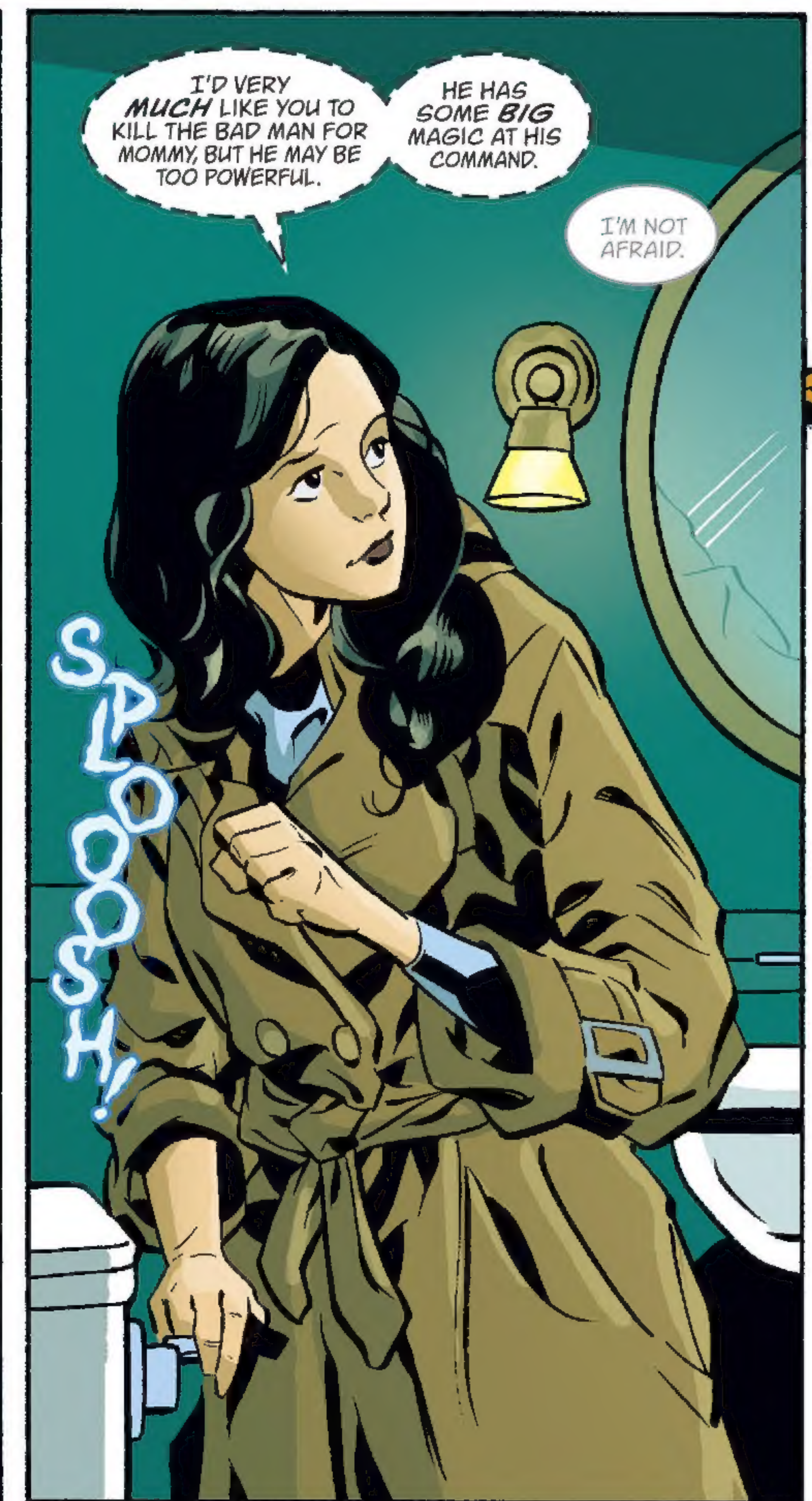


TIP TAP



I'M FINE! I JUST DROPPED TOO BIG A LOAD FOR THE DAINTY MODERN PLUMBING WE'RE STUCK WITH! VERY UNLADYLIKE!

NOW, BACK OFF, LIKE I SAID! DON'T YOU REALIZE WOMEN ARE *EMBARRASSED* ABOUT HAVING THEIR BATHROOM ACTIVITIES OVERHEARD?



I'D VERY MUCH LIKE YOU TO KILL THE BAD MAN FOR MOMMY, BUT HE MAY BE TOO POWERFUL.

HE HAS SOME *BIG* MAGIC AT HIS COMMAND.

I'M NOT AFRAID.



I KNOW, HONEY, BUT I AM. IF YOU GET KILLED, WHO WOULD THERE BE TO SAVE MOMMY BY RUNNING FOR HELP?

INSTEAD, CAN YOU FIND DADDY? HE'S FAR AWAY.



OF COURSE I CAN. I CAN ALWAYS FIND YOU AND DADDY, NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU GO.

GOOD. THEN GO FIND HIM AND TELL HIM TO COME HOME FAST. TELL HIM MOMMY'S IN TROUBLE.



OKAY, MOMMY. SHOULD I GO NOW?

YES, RIGHT NOW! BE VERY FAST AND VERY HEROIC!



GO!



ALL BETTER NOW, DARLING?

NO. NOT EVEN CLOSE. WILL YOU LET ME GO NOW?

AS SOON AS YOU START ACTING RATIONALLY, MY ONE TRUE LOVE.

Days passed, with my mother locked up in Prince Brandish's rooms high up in Fabletown's castle keep, just like the old stories about a princess locked in a tower.

I'LL BE BACK SOON, DEAR. JUST POPPING OUT FOR A FEW THINGS FROM THE MARKET.

IN TIME, YOU'LL DO THE SHOPPING, AS YOU SHOULD.

ALL WILL BE AS IT SHOULD.

IN TIME.

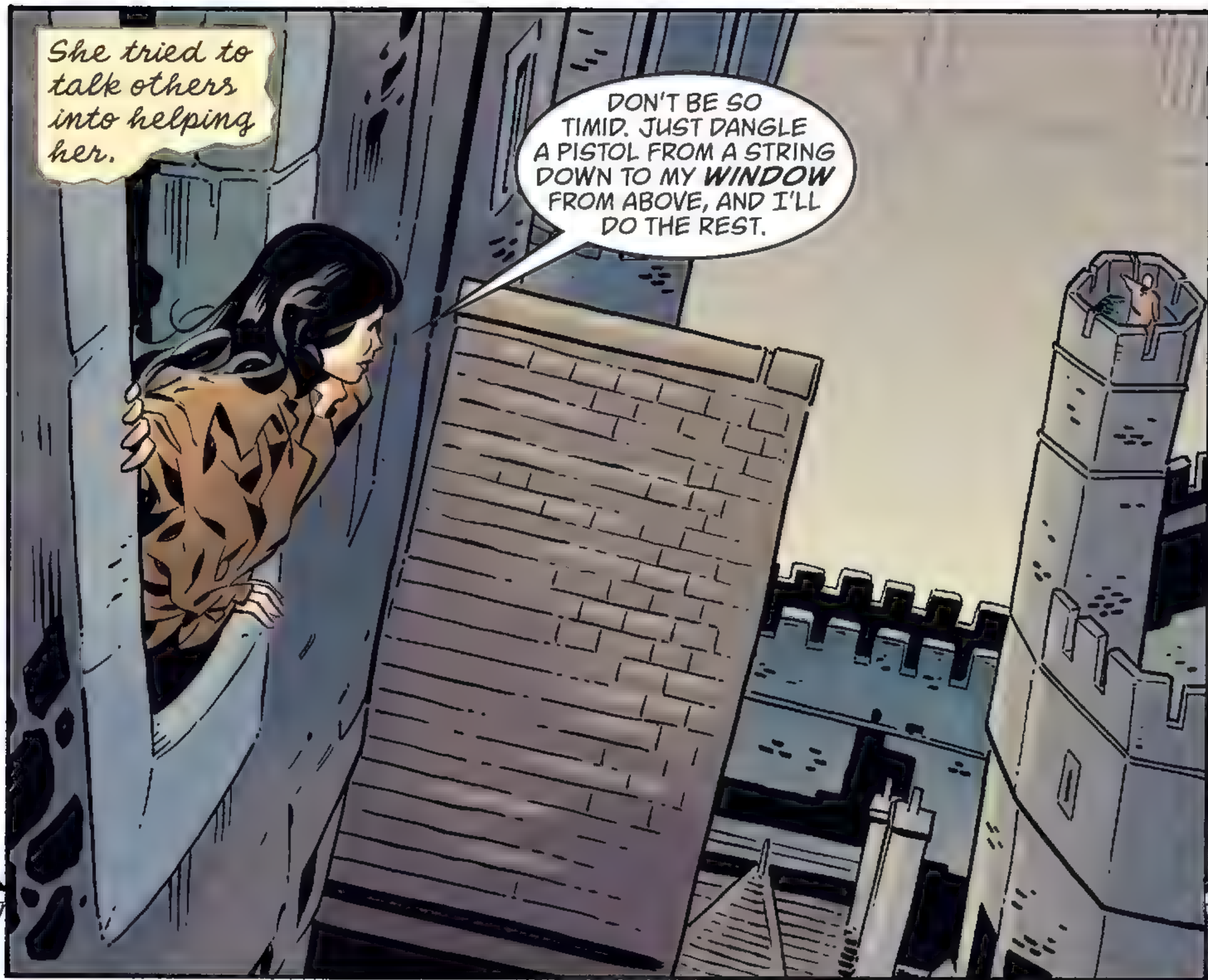
Every time Prince Brandish went out, my mother would try another escape attempt.

She built a rope out of towels and blankets and electrical wires, but it wasn't long enough.

DAMN IT.

She tried to talk others into helping her.

DON'T BE SO TIMID. JUST DANGLE A PISTOL FROM A STRING DOWN TO MY WINDOW FROM ABOVE, AND I'LL DO THE REST.

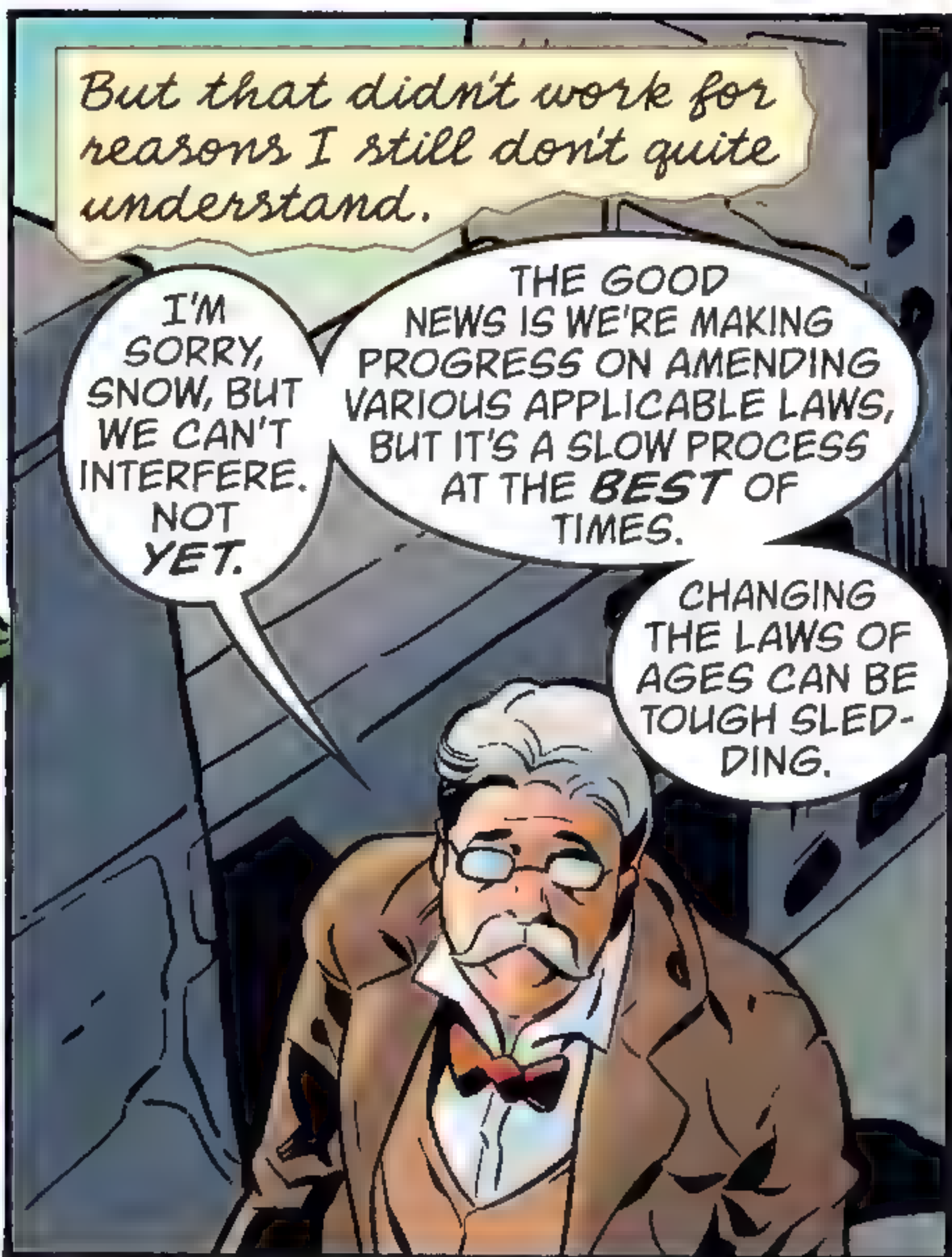


But that didn't work for reasons I still don't quite understand.

I'M SORRY, SNOW, BUT WE CAN'T INTERFERE. NOT YET.

THE GOOD NEWS IS WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS ON AMENDING VARIOUS APPLICABLE LAWS, BUT IT'S A SLOW PROCESS AT THE BEST OF TIMES.

CHANGING THE LAWS OF AGES CAN BE TOUGH SLEDGING.



THE BAD NEWS IS WE'RE STUCK ON WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN FAIRLY MAKE THE NEW LAWS RETROACTIVE, SO AS TO BE ABLE TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR SPECIFIC DILEMMA.



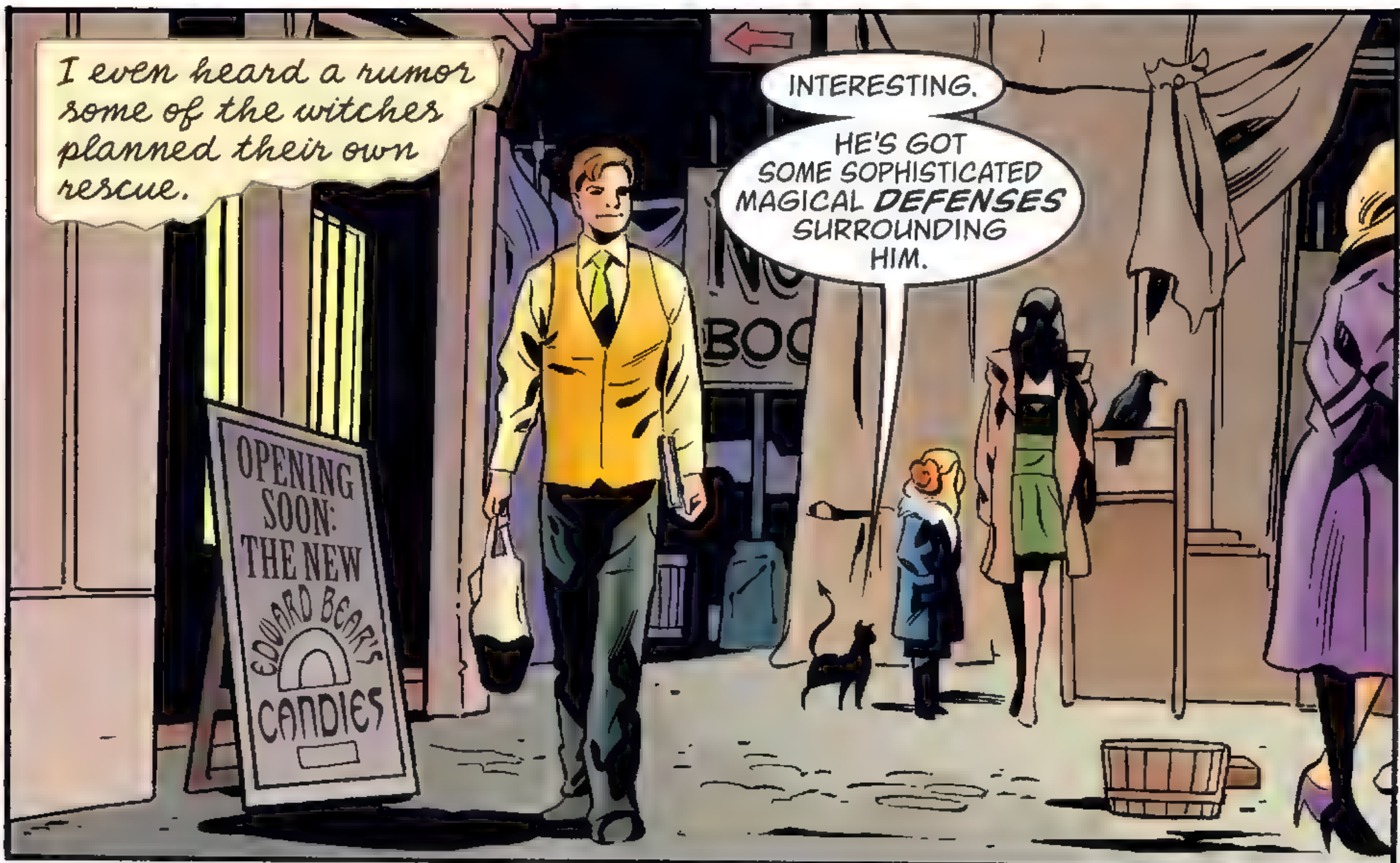
FOR CRAP'S SAKE, YOUR HONOR, JUST HELP ME ESCAPE AND KILL THE MAN, AND YOU CAN TRY ME UNDER ANY SET OF LAWS YOU LIKE.



IT DOESN'T HELP TO GIVE IN TO DESPAIR, SNOW. WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING. WE SPOKE TO ROSE AT THE FARM. YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN ARE FINE.

WELL--YOU KNOW--THE ONES WHO AREN'T CURRENTLY MISSING.





I even heard a rumor some of the witches planned their own rescue.

INTERESTING.
HE'S GOT SOME SOPHISTICATED MAGICAL DEFENSES SURROUNDING HIM.



WONDER WHERE HE CAME BY THEM. IT'S CERTAINLY SORCERER'S WORK, BUT LOOK AT THE CONSTRUCTION.

IT'S OVERLY COMPLEX AND DEFINITELY FOREIGN.



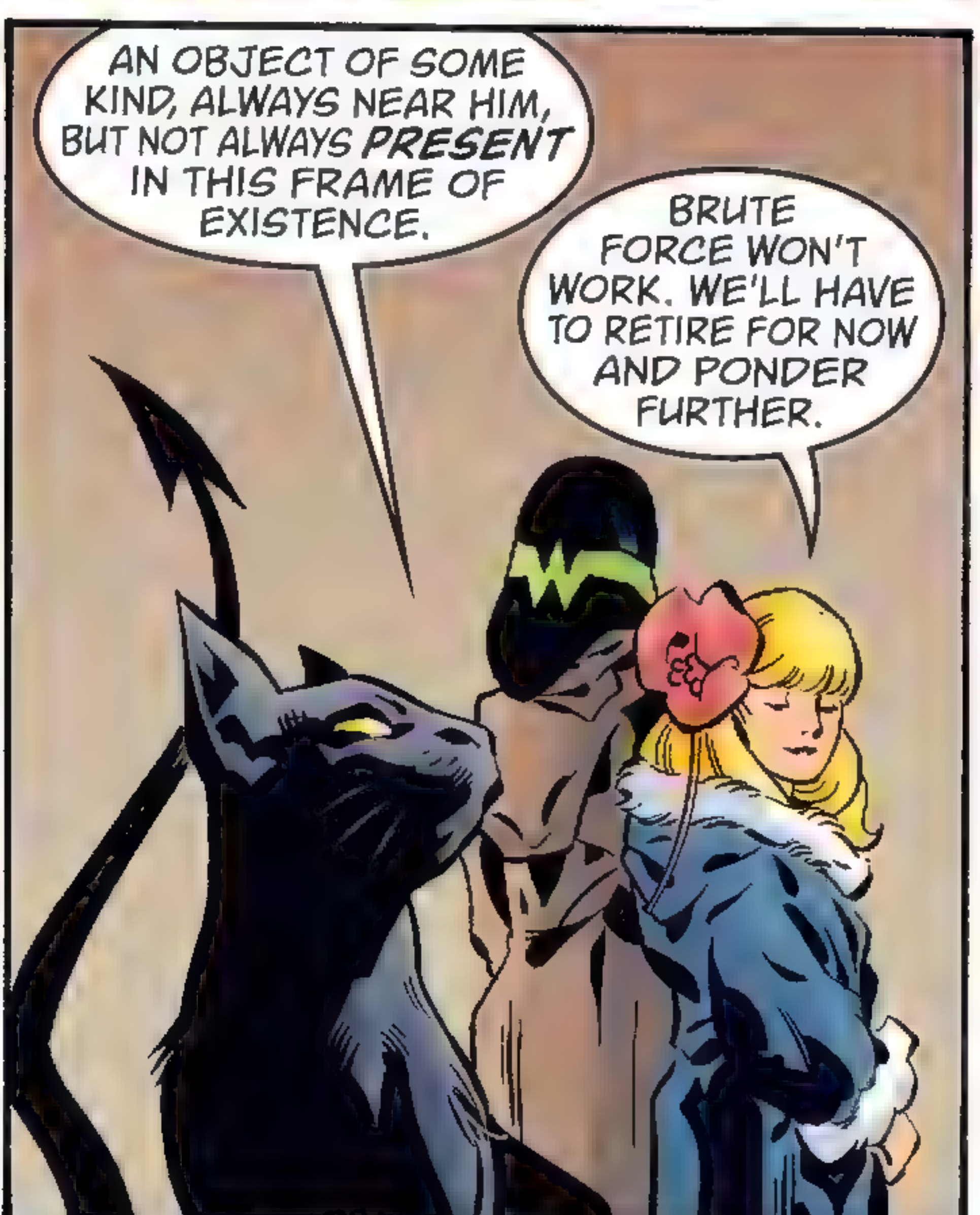
NOTE HOW ANY MORTAL ATTACK ON HIM WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE DEFLECTED TO HARM SNOW. THAT'S CLEVER.

IT CERTAINLY RULES OUT JUST BURNING HIM DOWN, LIKE THE SCUM HE IS.



I'LL HAVE TO TELL ROSE I CAN'T COMPLETE HER FIRE MISSION.

WHAT'S HIS POWER SOURCE?



AN OBJECT OF SOME KIND, ALWAYS NEAR HIM, BUT NOT ALWAYS PRESENT IN THIS FRAME OF EXISTENCE.

BRUTE FORCE WON'T WORK. WE'LL HAVE TO RETIRE FOR NOW AND PONDER FURTHER.



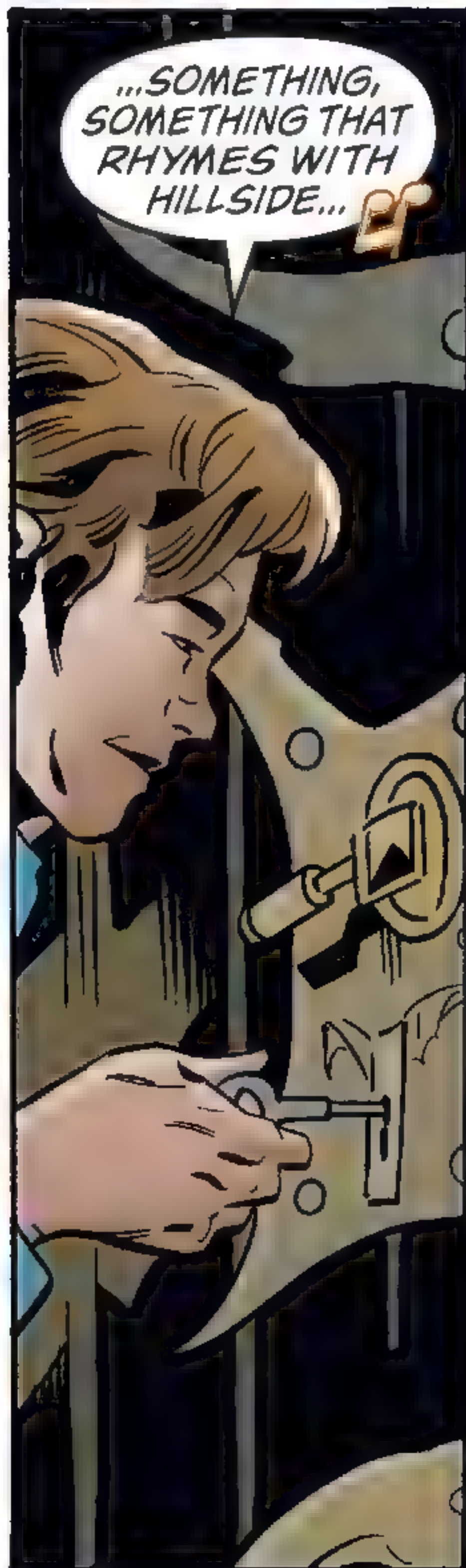
As the days wore on, my mother grew ever more desperate.

LOOK AT HIM, PETER. SO SMUG. BUT I COULD KILL HIM RIGHT NOW, BEFORE HE KNEW IT.

CAN'T DO IT, BO. THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR CREW PUT OUT THE WORD. HE'S OFFICIALLY UNTOUCHABLE.



...WEDDING BELLS, ON THE HILLSIDE...



...SOMETHING, SOMETHING THAT RHYMES WITH HILLSIDE...



HONEY, I'M HOME.



AH!

HAPPY TO SEE YOU TOO, SNOWDRIFT.

YOW, HOW THAT STINGS!

BUT LOOK AT YOUR OWN CHEEK, DARLING. THE INJURY YOU TRIED TO DO TO ME HAS CUT YOU INSTEAD.

AREN'T YOU GLAD I STOPPED YOU FROM GOING ALL THE WAY?



MY CUT WILL HEAL IMMEDIATELY. YOURS WON'T.

SORRY, BUT THAT'S HOW THE MAGIC WORKS.



AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU BROKE OUR BATHROOM MIRROR TO MAKE YOUR WEAPON.

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT'S SEVEN YEARS' BAD LUCK, DEAR?

OW!



LET GO!

YOU'RE BREAKING MY ARM!

EXACTLY!

CRACK
CRACK
CRACK



AAAAUUGHGHHH!

HOW ELSE WILL YOU LEARN?

NOW, PICK UP THE GROCERIES YOU MADE ME SPILL AND COOK MY SUPPER, YOU FOREST BRAT.

And a few days after that, in Haven...

...YOU MAKE BATH TIME SO MUCH FUN!



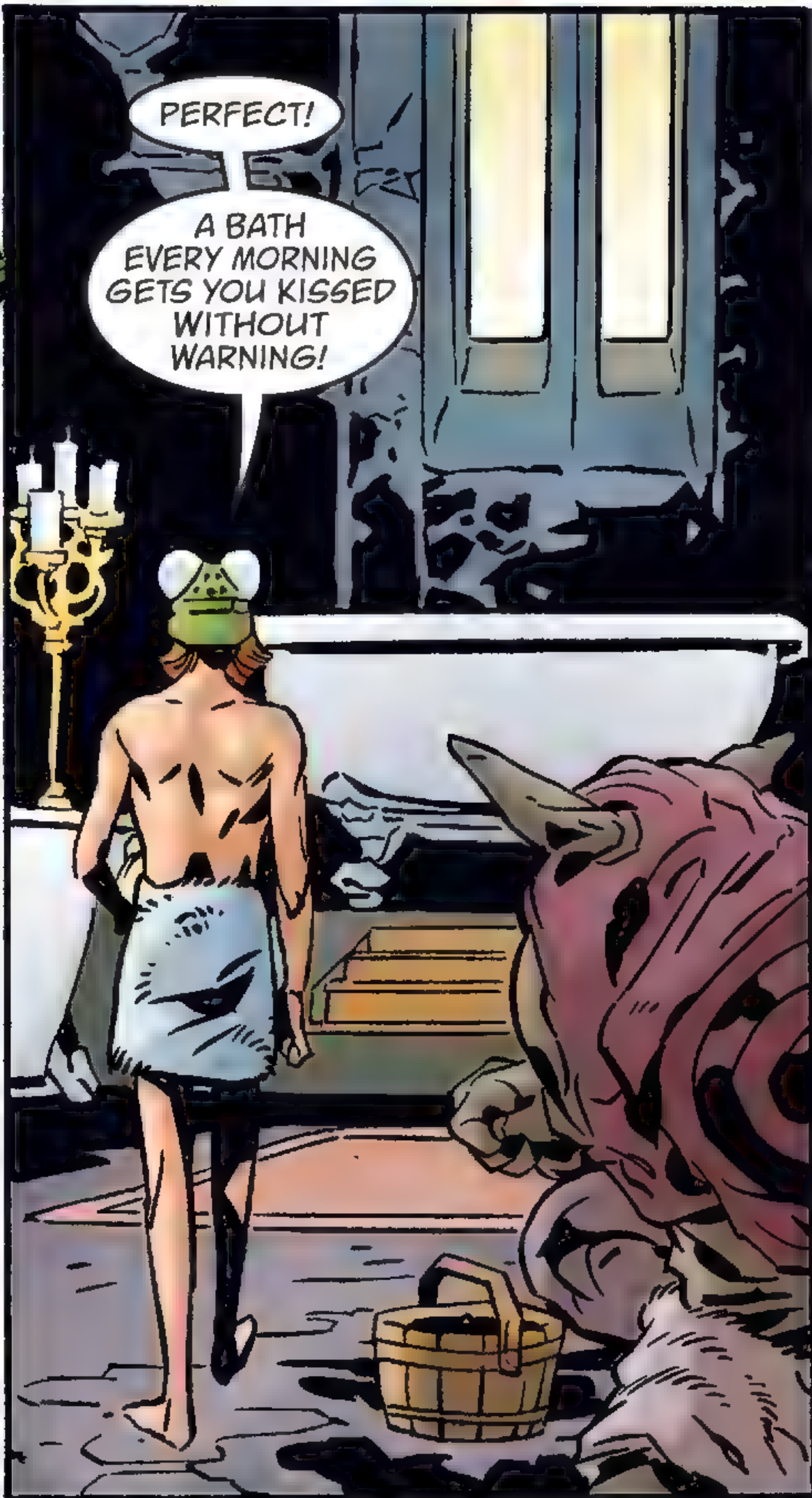
YOUR BATH HAS BEEN DRAWN, MAJESTY.

THANK YOU, MR. DAMPHOUSE.

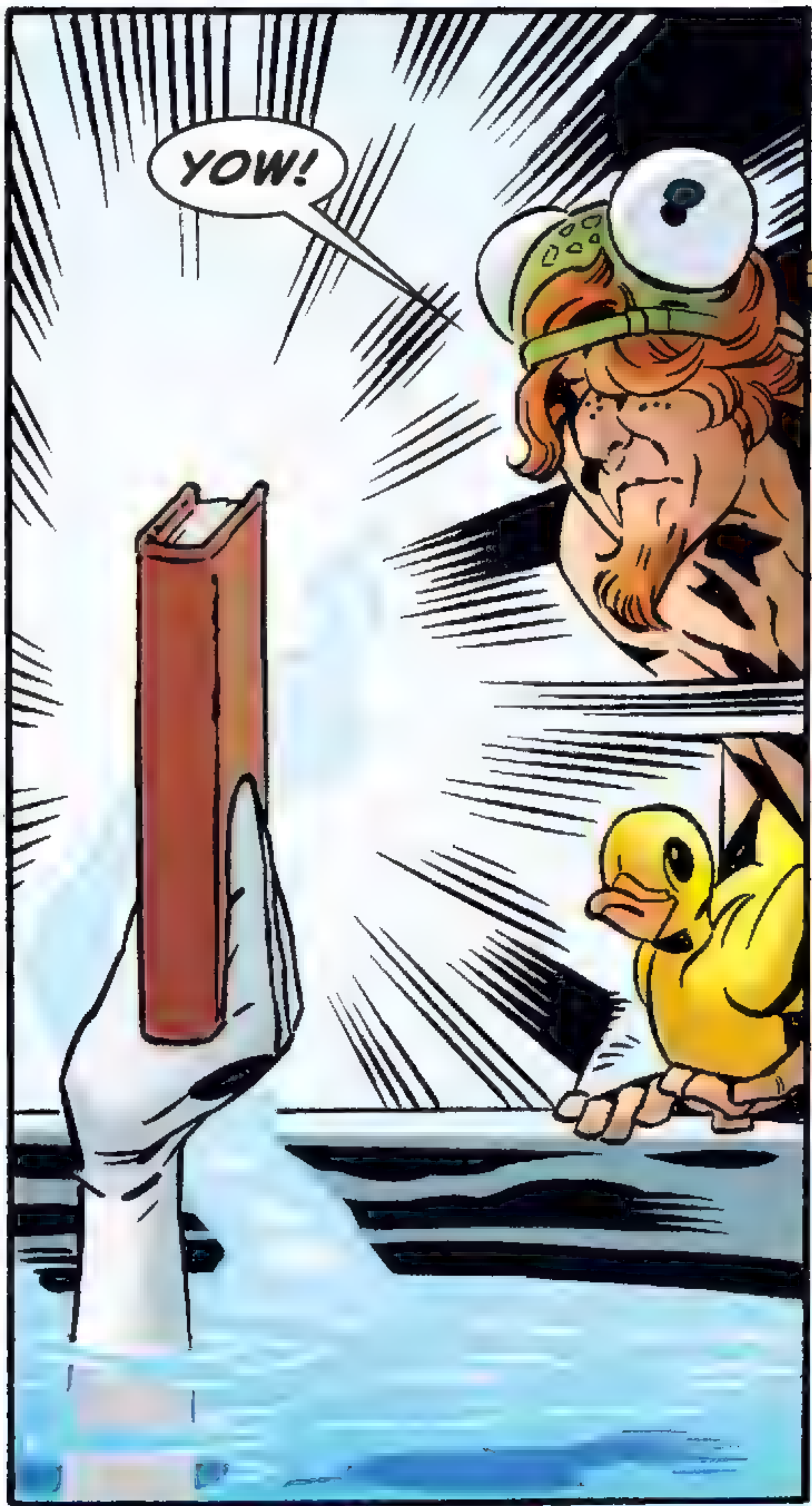


PERFECT!

A BATH EVERY MORNING GETS YOU KISSED WITHOUT WARNING!



YOW!

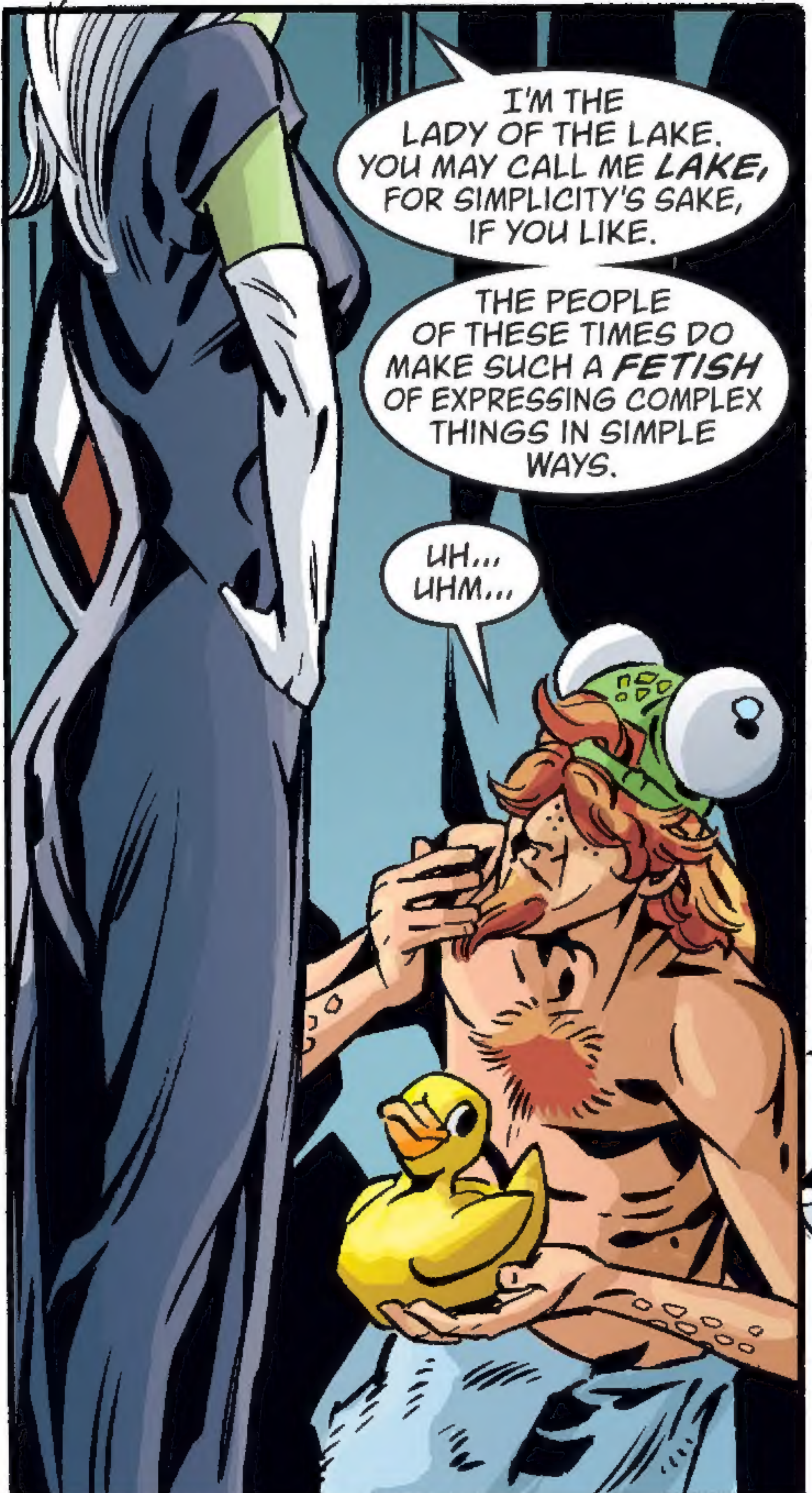




THERE'S A *GIRL* IN MY BATH!

I KNOW YOU.

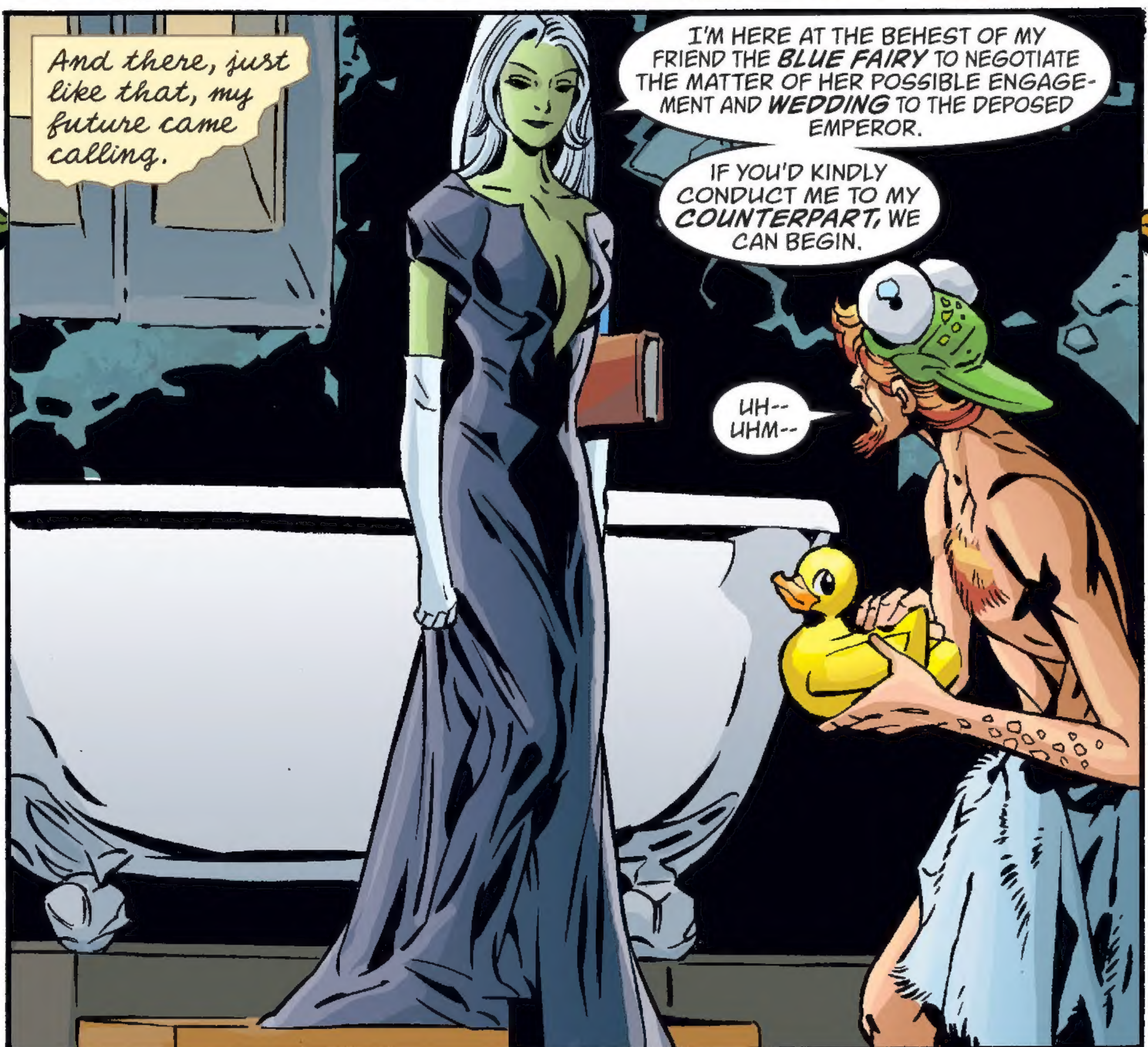
YOU CARRIED *EXCALIBUR* FOR A TIME AND THEN RETURNED IT TO ME, UNBLEMISHED BY DISHONOR AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. YOU'RE AMBROSE THE KING.



I'M THE LADY OF THE LAKE. YOU MAY CALL ME *LAKE*, FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE, IF YOU LIKE.

THE PEOPLE OF THESE TIMES DO MAKE SUCH A *FETISH* OF EXPRESSING COMPLEX THINGS IN SIMPLE WAYS.

UH... UHM...



And there, just like that, my future came calling.

I'M HERE AT THE BEHEST OF MY FRIEND THE *BLUE FAIRY* TO NEGOTIATE THE MATTER OF HER POSSIBLE ENGAGEMENT AND *WEDDING* TO THE DEPOSED EMPEROR.

IF YOU'D KINDLY CONDUCT ME TO MY *COUNTERPART*, WE CAN BEGIN.

UH-- UHM--

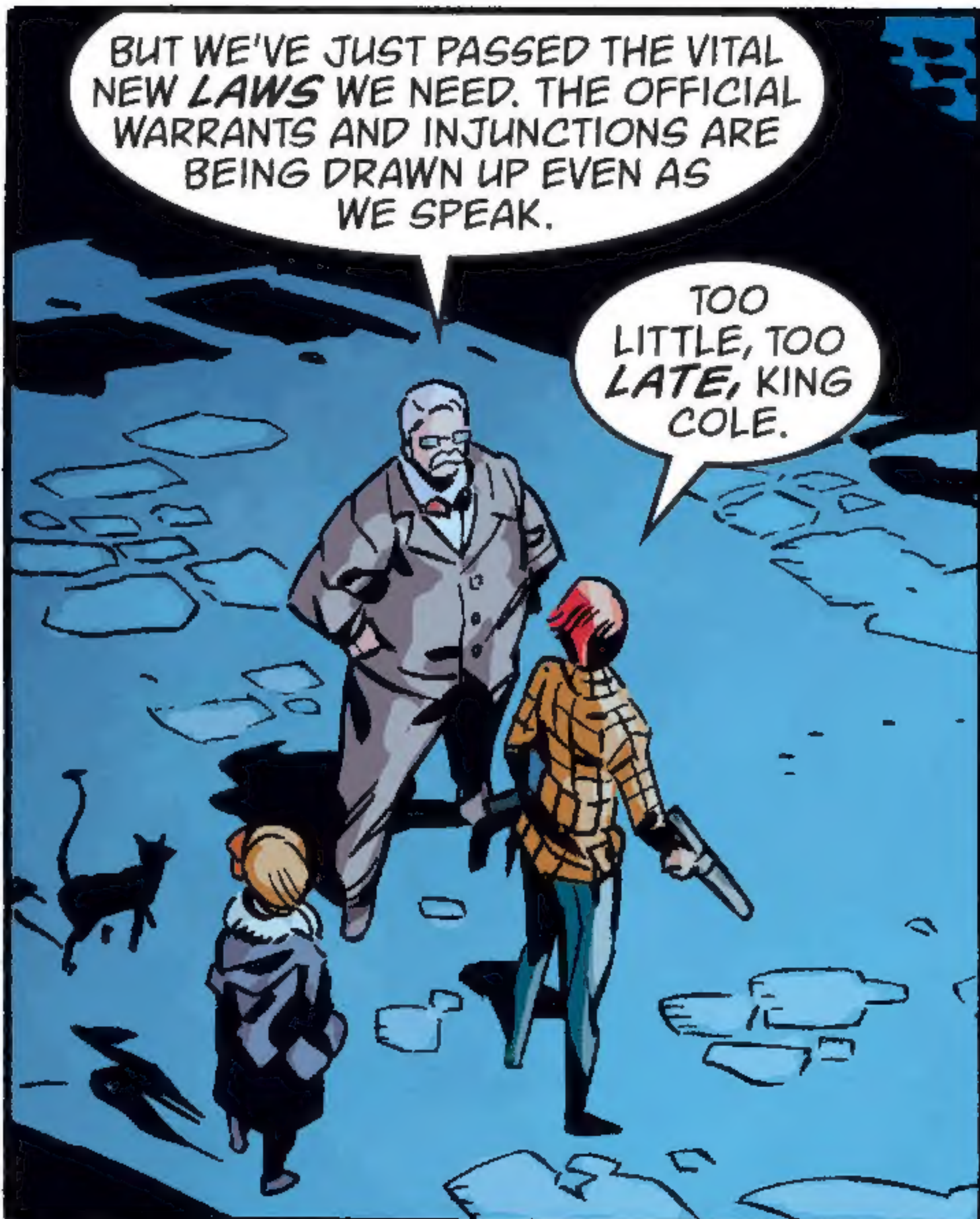
At about that time,
back in the mundy
world...

STAND ASIDE,
MR. MAYOR. NOT YOU
NOR ANYONE ELSE WILL
KEEP ME FROM DOING
WHAT YOU SHOULD'VE
DONE **DAYS**
AGO!



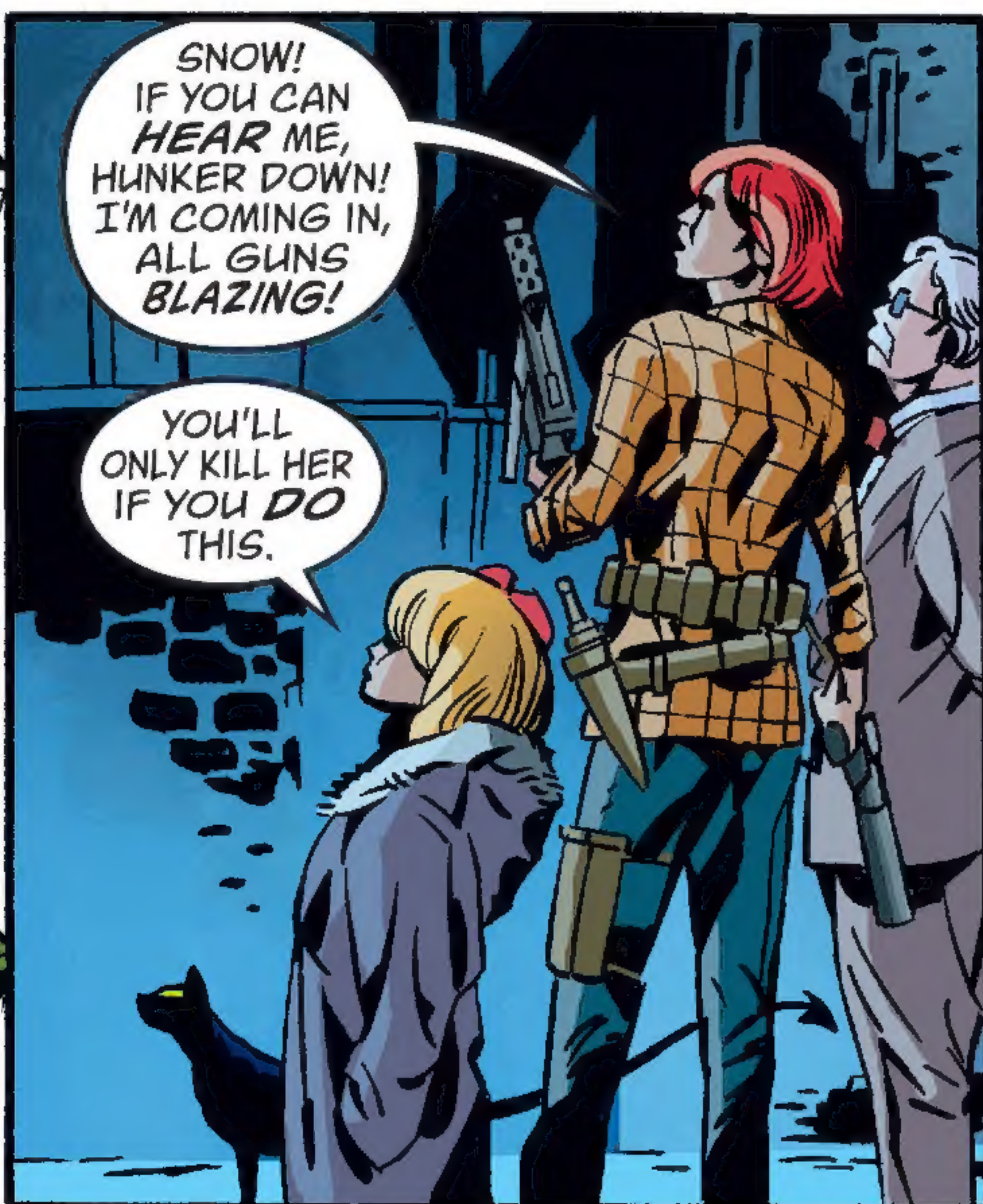
BUT WE'VE JUST PASSED THE VITAL
NEW **LAWS** WE NEED. THE OFFICIAL
WARRANTS AND INJUNCTIONS ARE
BEING DRAWN UP EVEN AS
WE SPEAK.

TOO
LITTLE, TOO
LATE, KING
COLE.



SNOW!
IF YOU CAN
HEAR ME,
HUNKER DOWN!
I'M COMING IN,
ALL GUNS
BLAZING!

YOU'LL
ONLY KILL HER
IF YOU **DO**
THIS.



NAW, DON'T
TELL HIM, BUT I'M
USING RUBBER BULLETS
AND KNOCKOUT GAS. SNOW
MIGHT NOT LIKE IT, BUT SHE
WON'T DIE AND PRINCE
SHITWHISTLE GOES
OUT LIKE A LIGHT.

THEN WE
THROW HIM IN
A DARK, DANK
CELL AND
FIGURE OUT
HOW TO
DISMANTLE HIS
DEFLECTION
SPELLS.

THAT
ACTUALLY
MIGHT WORK. WE
JUST NEED
TO--

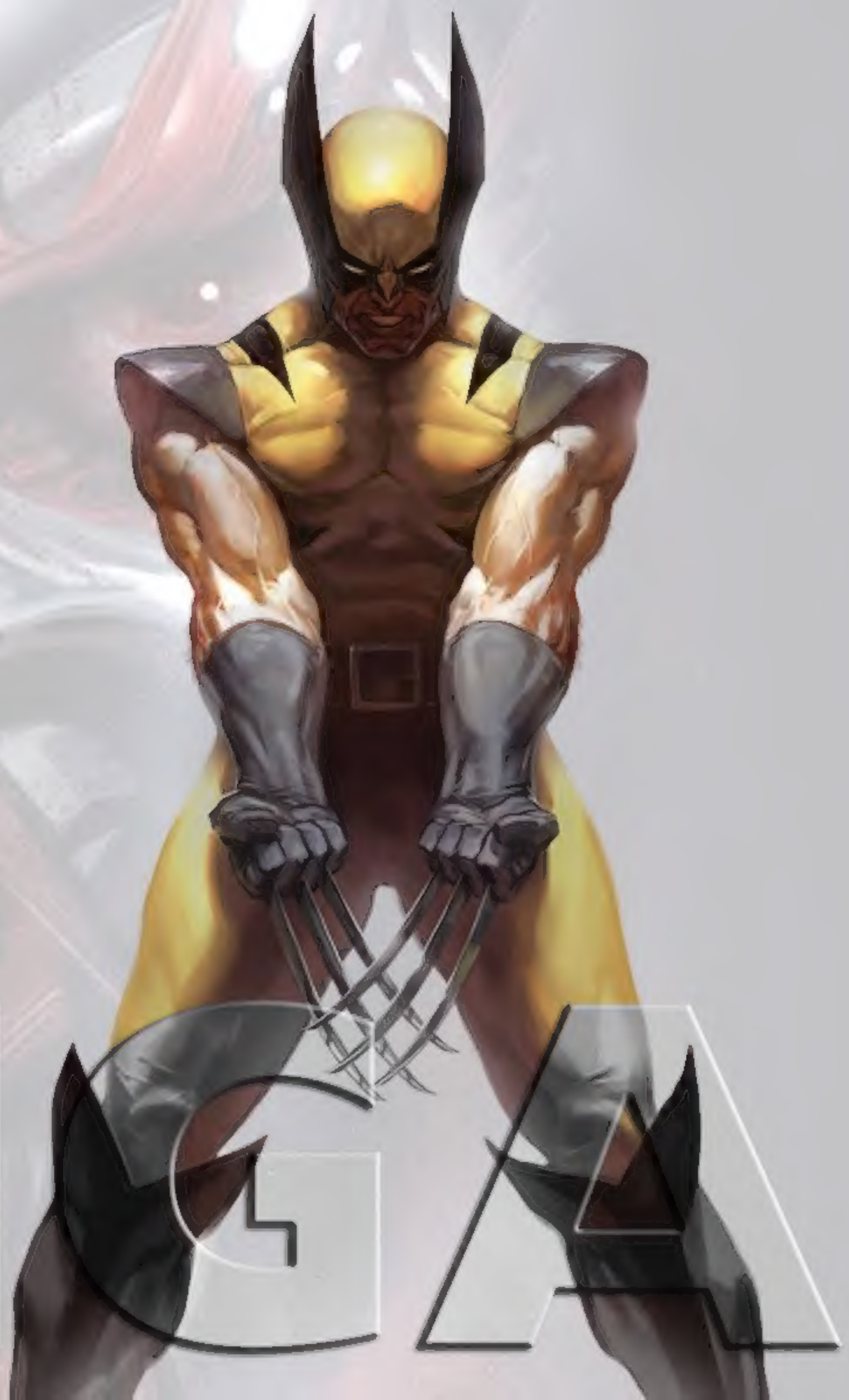


BOOM!





NEXT: SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PARABLE ABOUT THE GLASS HOUSE AND THE STONES!



NATHAN